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THE CALL TO SACRIFICE.

By DR. J. D. JONES, Bournemouth

A few weeks ago, in an article entitled "The Call for Economy," I urged those who are responsible for the administration of our various denominational societies to prepare for the financial stringency which is bound to come by exercising the strictest and most rigid economy. We must all sit down and consider and count the cost, and see whether we have wherewith to carry on efficiently the work we have taken in hand. If we have not, we must retrench. There is nothing else for it. To go on piling up deficits in the present financial condition of things, is not faith, it is folly.

I retract nothing of what I said in the article. None of the criticisms passed upon it has given me any reason for changing, or even modifying my views. But I have always recognized that economy on the part of our administrators would not *by itself* settle our problem. Or, at any rate, it would only settle our problem in a way to cover us with confusion and shame. If the only suggestion we have to make for the relief of our present difficulties is that our administrators should exercise the exactest economy, and should take care to keep their

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expenditure within the limits of their income, that might easily commit us to a policy of perpetual retreat and withdrawal which would be an eternal reproach to our denominational honour and to our Christian devotion. "Cut your coat according to your cloth" is a wise enough proverb for our everyday secular business, but it cannot be the sole rule for the conduct of our Christian enterprises, otherwise we may find ourselves some day with so little cloth that we cannot make a coat out of it at all. In Christian work, at any rate, it is not nough to tell our leaders to "cut the coat according to the cloth"; we must see to it that they have sufficient cloth to cut a coat big enough for the need. In other words, along with the call to our administrators to economise, there must go a call to our people to sacrifice. It is the latter call I want to sound forth in this article.

I begin with the statement of what I believe to be an unchallengeable fact—our Christian giving, broadly speaking, is altogether inadequate and unworthy. It is spasmodic, emotional, occasional, and not reasoned and systematic. As I move about amongst the churches I hear a good many references to the work done some years ago by a Mr. John Ross. He was a minister, without pastoral charge, who made it his business to go in and out amongst the churches urging upon all Christian people the duty of regular and proportional giving. I dare say many who listened to him paid little or no heed. But the seed he sowed sometimes fell on good ground and brought forth much fruit. Some of the most liberal and generous donors in our denomination have told me that they learned their first lessons as to the duty and method of Christian giving from Mr. Ross's lips, and to this day they regulate their giving by the principles he laid down. It would be a godsend to us if a second Mr. Ross could be found who would undertake a similar passionate pilgrimage throughout our denominational borders. It is not easy for the minister in charge to speak to his people about this subject. He exposes himself to the taunt that he is thinking mainly of his own salary. I do not say that even this excuses a minister for being dumb on what is a plain matter of Christian duty. But I appreciate the difficulty, and as a matter of simple fact and experience many a pastor when it comes to the subject of money, feels that his tongue is tied. A minister, free of pastoral charge, known and honored throughout our churches, who would make it his business to speak plainly and frankly to our people about their Christian duty in the matter of giving would, I repeat, be a godsend to us at the present juncture. For no one can pretend that our giving is what it ought to be. Some of it is *mean.* All our church officers could tell stories of astonishing and incredible meanness witnessed by them when taking up the usual Sunday collection. Diamonds on the fingers, furs on the back, *and a penny* in the plate somehow do not seem to go well together.

Much of it is *emotional* and *spasmodic.* The amount given depends very much on the power and pathos of the appeal. I know how this presses on ministers and missionaries. It is a perfect nightmare to the preacher to think that it depends on how he preaches whether the collection for the County Union or the L. M. S. is large or small. His very anxiety about the collection is enough to make the best of preachers preach badly. And it acts perniciously in this way also, especially as far as the mis-

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sionary society is concerned: the eloquent speaker interests the people in his own particular work, with the result that he gets gifts earmarked for his own special mission. Another missionary, not so gifted in speech perhaps, but doing equally as good a work, gets no such help. The result is that one mission gets more than enough, and another gets starved. There is always this element of favoritism in emotional giving, and it is bad for the work as a whole. It will be a good day for the L. M. S. when all these personal gifts are stopped, and all our missionary money is sent to headquarters, where alone it can be administered with due regard to the relative need and importance of each part of the field. And not only is this emotional giving uncertain and partial: the motive of it is just as wrong as wrong can be. Giving ought to spring, not from sentiment, but from conviction. Our generosity ought not to be at the mercy of a sermon or a speech; it ought to be governed by our sense of the importance of the work and of our duty to God.

Then, once again, a vast amount of our giving is *unthinking*. We do not when we offer a subscription, seriously ask ourselves whether the subscription we are offering is really adequate in view of the claims of the work, or whether it is adequate in proportion to our own incomes. We shall never give as we ought until we put thought and prayer into our giving. Are our gifts adequate in view of the importance of the work? Take the L. M. S. for instance. We give our five shillings or our guinea, and perhaps flatter ourselves we have done our duty. But what is the L. M. S.? It is simply the society by means of which we seek to extend Christ's Kingdom. Sometimes I think it would be a good thing if we could leave the Society out of account, and think simply of the extension of Christ's Kingdom and the salvation of souls. Well, does five shillings or a guinea represent our interest in the extension of Christ's Kingdom? Is that all we are prepared to do or give that Christ may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied? Then we ought to ask ourselves whether our gifts are adequate in proportion to our incomes. The Jew gave a tithe of all that he got. Surely we Christian folk ought, at any rate, to do no less. But if all Christian people set aside a tenth part of their income for religious purposes, I imagine the difficulties of all our societies would at once come to an end. We must recover the idea of *proportional* giving. Our gifts ought to grow with our incomes. Indeed, the larger our incomes the greater ought to be the proportion of it which we give to God. Suppose we were all of us to sit down and examine our subscription lists with this question in our minds, "How much owest thou to thy Lord?" and were to answer it quite honestly, and then express the answer in our gifts, what a difference it would make!

I say nothing about sacrifice in giving. Sacrifice is a word much in use, but it is not a fact much in practice. What have we really *given up* in order that Christ may come to His own? The gifts we offer to God's work are paltry and ridiculous as compared with the money we spend on our luxuries. People—Christian people—spend more on an evening's entertainment than they do on the support of struggling Christian churches in their own neighbourhood. They think nothing of paying five to ten shillings for a concert ticket, but they give grudgingly even that amount to the L. M. S. And as for motor-cars, they spend more on motor-cars in a month than they give to

religious objects in a year. *It isn't right.* If people could only be brought to think and pray over their expenditure, a pretty drastic revision would have to take place.

I have said that pinching times are before us. Some cannot give what they have been accustomed to do, for the simple reason that the money is not there. But, at any rate, let us see to it that our gifts to Christ's cause are the last to be touched. That is not where economy ought to begin. Let it begin with our luxuries and indulgences. I have faith to believe that if we settle this matter of income and expenditure in the light of God, even though the War presses upon us heavily, we shall give not less, but more, for the prosecution of that Holy War which is to make the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

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Review by Dr. R. F. Horton.

The Meaning and Value of Mysticism.
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What a long way we have travelled from Alfred Vaughan's *Half Hours with the Mystics* to Mrs. Herman's *Meaning and Value of Mysticism.* Alfred Vaughan introduced us to the mystics, but did not give us much help in estimating their value. Mrs. Herman also introduces us to the mystics—to some of whom we have known far too little, such as blessed Angela di Foligno, and Walter Hilton and Richard Rolle, our own English mystics, who demonstrate that we are far from being the stolid, unemotional race that we suppose ourselves to be; but she sets herself, bove everything, to explain what mysticism is and to give us the clue for judging it, criticising it, setting it in its right place. There lies the value of the book. She is not herself a mystic, but she is alive to the meaning and value of mysticism; and she is a great improvement upon certain writers who have filled a large place of late on our shelves—writers who leave us always in doubt whether mysticism is a legitimate religious method or a form of disease, always in doubt whether the conclusions that the mystics reach are a revelation from Heaven or the movements of approaching insanity. Not the least valuable thing in the book is the admirable bibliography of books bearing upon the subject.

Mrs. Herman writes with extraordinary vigour and eloquence, but also with a fullness of knowledge and accuracy of reference which place her n the ranks of scholars. Perhaps her conclusion may be given as the key to the whole study:—

We have also seen that, taken in its totality, mysticism is not the pearl of great price for which the wise merchantman of the spirit is ever searching; it is rather a wide and stony field wherein he must dig diligently to find goodly pearls, and where the deceptive and worthless lie nearest the surface.

The pearl of great price in mysticism is Christ, and for seeing that Mrs. Herman makes us all her debtors. That truth brings together writers as widely opposed to one another as Baron von Hugel and Principal Forsyth. Neither of these great writers would perhaps say with Mrs. Herman's simplicity that Christ is the essential element in mysticism, the one guarantee against its vagaries, the fullest expression of all the truth that it can reveal; but both of them would agree that the statement is essentially correct. What Mrs. Herman succeeds in showing is that the psychic experiences, the trances, the raptures, the visions, the locutions, which mark out exceptional persons as mystics, are only the occasions, and not the causes, of the valuable and spiritual mystical experience. St. Augustine mistrusted the occasional raptures which gave him glimpses of Heaven. The solid realities of mysticism are inward experiences of the spirit and a realised relation with God which are more valuable and more convincing than visions or voices or trances.

No book has made the subject more fascinating, but the fascination lies not only in the interest of the mystics and their experiences, but chiefly in the discrimination which enables us to discern what is valuable and what is valueless. Mrs. Herman, for example, while dealing very appreciatively with Miss Underhill or John Cordelier, is unflinching in her demonstration of their limitations and mistakes. The pseudo-mystics ignore Jesus, or explain Him away. But on this point there can be no wavering. A writer on mysticism who does not understand the centrality of Christ and His redemption is sure, before long, to lead us astray.

But she is equally strong in resisting the anti-intellectual interpretation of life, and the attempts made by modern writers, like Bishop Chandler, to justify as the sole truth of God the unrelated and misinterpreted occurrences of the moment. She goes heartily w th Pascal's great thought that love is reason, and resents every attempt to truncate the full life of the spirit by pitting the emotional against the intellectual.

While her handling of theology has not that firmness of touch which characterises her handling of philosophy, Mrs. Herman is yet singularly shrewd in criticising theological tendencies, and keeps herself abreast of the latest thought. She sees how Ritschlianism is a spent force, and how surely the pendulum swings back to metaphysics. If the Ritschlian objection to mysticism holds at all, it only tells against the mistakes and limitations of actual mystics. The true mystical side of religion, the side which is identical with the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit, must come back. The inward relation with Christ as Redeemer will be indicated again, whatever Ritschl or Mrs. Herman may say.

Troeltsch's expectation that the future development of theology will be a synthesis of neo-platonism and the New Testament verities, commands the author's approbation; and she is able, therefore, to give a shrewd blow at Professor Scott (p. 332) for maintaining that the Logos doctrine and the historical development in the Gospel remain unreconciled. The Logos doctrine is yet to be the true interpretation of Christ's life, and the link which unites our theology and cosmology, the unifying truth which brings harmony and meaning into the sum of our thoughts.

And the gems which sparkle in her pages are not all taken from the mystics whom she is reporting; often they flash out from her own richly stored, actively toiling mind. "To live as a Christian is to live dangerously" (p. 84) is a noble and far-reaching paradox. "To conform to the average is to lose one's soul" is as fresh in expression as it is profoundly true. "It is only on the prehistoric Rock of Eternal Love that the crucified Son of Man can truly be lifted up from the earth" leads us to the centre of Mrs. Herman's philosophy of history and interpretation of theology. It is a saying as noble as those of the mystics, and it leaves us her lasting debtors.

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